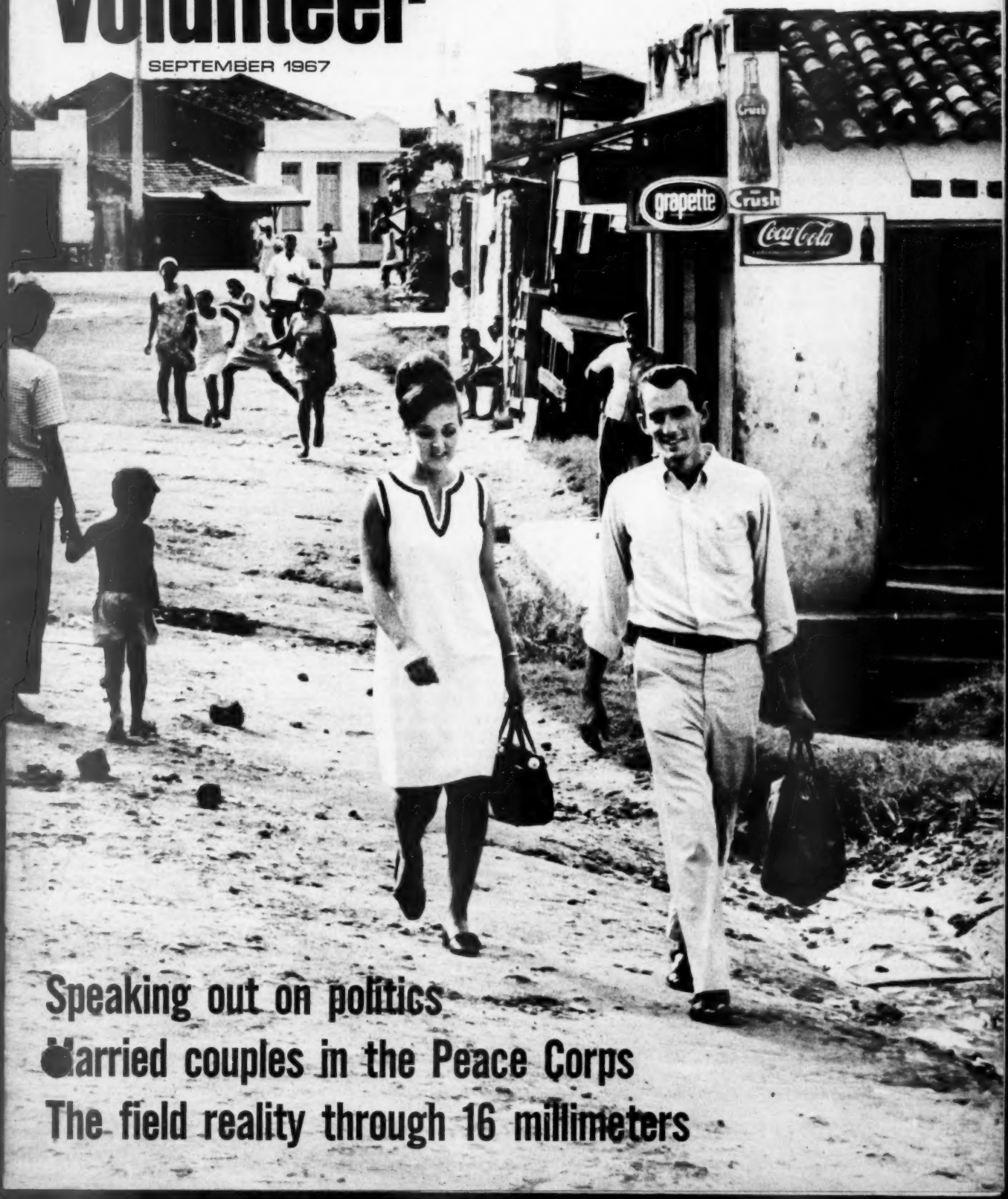
PEACE CORPS

volunteer

SEPTEMBER 1967



Speaking out on politics

Married couples in the Peace Corps

The field reality through 16 millimeters

Political expression became an overt Peace Corps issue this summer. It was raised when a group of Volunteers in Chile circulated a petition protesting U.S. policy in Vietnam. Director Jack Vaughn responded with a statement that Volunteers could express individual opinions on U.S. policy if they avoided public identification with the Peace Corps. A Volunteer who persisted in carrying his views to the U.S. and host press was terminated, and his case received widespread attention. Overseas, at training sites and in Washington, the Peace Corps re-examined the nature and risks of political expression by its members. Subsequently, the non-identification statement was amended so as to permit individual Volunteers to address U.S. authorities and journals on U.S. political issues and identify themselves as Volunteers.

Politics and the Peace Corps

By **STUART AWBREY**

The short, hot, political summer of the Peace Corps reaffirmed the rights of its members to exercise personal discretion in matters of political speech. It also demonstrated that among Peace Corps members the right to speak out on political issues often generates more concern than the issues themselves.

Neither of these conditions is original, or surprising. The sustaining power of the Peace Corps rests less in the hands of its shifting and occasionally indifferent constituencies than in its ideal. The current generation of Volunteers and staff members, no less than their predecessors, considers free speech a cornerstone of that ideal.

Ideal exceeds reality

Thousands of Volunteers have testified through completion of service questionnaires that the idea of the Peace Corps is greater than the actual experience. Thousands of Volunteers and staff members have attempted to enhance that experience by bringing the operational reality of the Peace Corps as close as possible to its ideal. That task never ceases, but in approaching it, Volunteers and staff members love nothing quite so much as a confrontation between the ideal and its application. The subject of free expression provides a natural arena for this confrontation because implicit in the Peace Corps idea is the notion that individuals, by their own actions, including speech, might affect societies in a meaningful way.

This confrontation between the idea and the application, as they relate to free speech on political issues, was both natural and inevitable. It was probably necessary, too, because the right to exercise personal discretion in speech, rather than have that discretion imposed from some other authority, must be won or lost by each generation, which for the Peace Corps might imply as often as every two years. One senior staff member sensitive to the pitfalls of political expression suggested that "Volunteers are always testing the Peace Corps" in this area; it is equally true that the agency's open society is always testing the Volunteers.

Individual and group

The right to exercise personal discretion, as opposed to the imposition of institutional restraints, applies not only to political speech but to any Peace Corps activity in which the individual might jeopardize the group. An example that comes to mind is in the sphere of social behavior. The dismissal of a Volunteer whose public behavior was judged to have been harmful to the Peace Corps program in Eastern Nigeria created a controversy that surrounded Jack Vaughn during his visit there last fall. The director sustained the judgment of the local staff that the Volunteer's indiscretion, and not his morals (as some contended) warranted his dismissal.

As someone suggested at the forum held in Washington on the subject of political involvement, if and when the Peace Corps ever gets around to writing a White Paper on the topic it should be called a Grey Paper. It could never reflect an absolutist position because the history of the Peace Corps has been compiled by men and women who called themselves, after Kennedy, "idealists without illusions." Their history generally is composed in deeds more than in words, but the evidence suggests that they were and are generally judicious in their choice of words, especially their political words.

Free expression

The fact is that for more than six years, and particularly in the past year and one half under Jack Vaughn, members of the Peace Corps have enjoyed as much if not more freedom of expression than members or employes of any private or government institution in the United States, with the exception of the universities and colleges. This freedom has applied especially to speech and writings on matters that relate directly to the philosophy and operation of the Peace Corps. It has also applied to speech and writings on matters of public concern in the United States, particularly but not exclusively on the subject of civil rights. It has not applied to speech and writings on matters of public concern in host countries, where policy and practice have dictated non-involvement.

PEACE CORPS
volunteer
SEPTEMBER 1967
Volume V Number 11
Published monthly by the Office of Volunteer Support, Peace Corps, Washington, D. C. 20525.
Stuart Awbrey, editor; Pat Brown, associate editor; Dolores Calisto, editorial assistant. Design by Paul Reed.

ON THE COVER: Carl Purcell photographed Kay and Jeff Boyer walking through a favela in Salvador, Brazil, where Jeff is a community development worker and Kay is a nurse in a mental hospital. The Boyers are among the growing percentage of Volunteers who are married. For a look at marriage as a Peace Corps institution, see pages 4-15.

COMING IN OCTOBER: A nomination for Marshall McLuhan as earlybird biographer of the Peace Corps.

A development in Chile this summer challenged the assumption that members of the Peace Corps have a de facto right to public expression of private views on political questions. A group of Volunteers began to circulate a petition protesting U.S. policy in Vietnam, which prompted Jack Vaughn to tell them that Volunteers had a right to express individual opinions to U.S. authorities and the U.S. press so long as they avoided public identification with the Peace Corps. His medium was a letter to Volunteers which concluded:

"I think you will agree that our commitment to the Peace Corps is made as individuals and does not entail subscribing to or endorsing any set of political beliefs. The Peace Corps as an organization has neither the expertise nor the mission to address itself to political matters outside our area of responsibility. It has no position on such matters and no one can, in good conscience, seek to speak, or to permit others to infer that they speak, for its 15,000 members."

One of the Chile Volunteers, Bruce Murray, wrote to *The New York Times* protesting the war in Vietnam and the policy enunciated by Vaughn. *The Times* did not print Murray's letter, but treated the petition and the policy; a wire service picked up the story and it was treated in the Chile press. Though Murray was discouraged from further action by his regional Peace Corps director, he translated his letter to *The Times*, delivered it to *El Sur* in Concepción and had it published. He was terminated on the grounds that he had involved himself in a political issue that is contentious in Chile. Back in Washington, he told Peace Corps staff members that if he returned to Chile he would continue to carry the same issue to the Chilean and U.S. press.

Vietnam platform

For at least one newspaper and a handful of individuals in the United States, the Murray dismissal presented an opportunity to use the Peace Corps as a platform for their views on Vietnam, as Murray himself had done. But by far the majority of those concerned with the case gave their attention to the rights of Peace Corps members to address themselves to matters of public concern in the United States. A quintet of Volunteers in Ecuador quickly tested the non-Peace Corps identification edict with a letter to *The New York Times*, which dwelt primarily with the policy and summarily with Vietnam. These Volunteers were not terminated. They had not injected their views on a contentious political issue into the host press. Vaughn followed shortly with an amendment to the earlier ban on identification with the Peace Corps in letters home; he said the right to write individual letters to U.S. authorities and journals on U.S. political issues, using Peace Corps identification or not, was okay with the Peace Corps. This alteration in effect reaffirmed the rights of Peace Corps members to address themselves to public questions at home. Vaughn also reaffirmed the policy of non-involvement in host national political issues.

Discretion reaffirmed

On the surface, the Peace Corps was back where it started, perched precariously, as always, on the discretion of its membership. But it had gone through a classic crisis, and some things would not be the same again. The changes, like so many in the Peace Corps, could not easily be measured, primarily because most of them were wrought in the minds and attitudes of participants. The very foundations of the non-political nature of the Peace Corps were re-examined with a clear realization that a new chapter was being written. Returned Volunteers no longer associated with the agency attempted for the first time to exercise group influence on the agency. Returned Volunteers on the staff promoted a forum on political involvement and engaged with senior officials in the largest and longest forum in memory. Thousands of trainees tackled the question in discussion groups.

The chapter, like most of the chapters in the Peace Corps political book, remains unfinished. It is impossible to predict, for example, if the coming generation of the Peace Corps will exercise its powers of discretion so wisely as most of their predecessors. All we know is that they will have the chance to try. The current generation has taught the Peace Corps that it has less to fear from political issues than from restraints on their discussion. That lesson in itself was worthy of the experience.

MARRIED VOLUNTEERS:

A growing subculture

Being a married Peace Corps Volunteer is more popular—and more practiced—today than ever before. One out of every five current Volunteers is married compared with the one out of ten who served in the Peace Corps five years ago.

The proportion of married Volunteers to single ones has increased yearly since 1962, and so has the number of staff members who agree with a colleague's statement: "There's nothing better than a really good married couple overseas."

More current programs are being designed with the marrieds in mind. Gabon, which has had only one married couple in its entire Peace Corps history, will use couples to facilitate difficult housing arrangements in a mobile health project being planned. Married Volunteers are being selected for family planning work in India. A community development group consisting almost exclusively of married couples has been in Malaysia since January, working in a rural Muslim-influenced area.

Staff members in other countries as well have observed that married couples can often move more easily than single Volunteers within highly traditional societies, and are beginning to program accordingly.

But the continuing majority of Peace Corps jobs and sites calls for individual Volunteers, and the Peace Corps itself, both through rules and staff attitudes, puts individual job performance first. To the extent that being married in the Peace Corps helps an individual perform better in his job, it is highly endorsed; to the extent that it detracts from an individual's effectiveness, it meet with disapproval. In this sense, "marriage can either be a double blessing or a double curse . . . with many shades in between," says a staff member.

The Office of Selection is often first to see the "curse" aspects. The office has to turn away a number of married applicants, most of whom are individually qualified for Peace Corps service but can't be placed together (examples: husband has an M.A. in history, wife is a secretary; husband is a civil engineer, wife is a nurse).

The placement of all married couples is subject to the varying and fluctuating requirements of programs, countries and regions. Some countries (Nepal and the Dominican Republic are examples) find team jobs hard to design.

While some Volunteers argue that the Peace Corps does not capitalize fully on the "team" potential of married couples, most married Volunteers want to be treated as individuals. In fact, most complaints are that the Peace Corps arbitrarily lumps them into "emotional units."

Two as one

"The sins of one become the sins of both," laments a married Volunteer.

Or, in reverse, a married couple rated "no better than some single Volunteers" is sent to a choice, remote site because the couple is considered to be a self-sufficient unit.

Some peer ratings, site assignments and scattered programming have displayed such unit-thinking. The consensus of Field Selection Officers returning from overseas visits appears to justify one way of looking at married couples collectively: the FSOs have consistently observed that in cases of married couples where one spouse was judged stronger than the other before or during training, the strong spouse became weaker in the field rather than strengthening the weak partner. These findings have led some Peace Corps staff members to adopt the rule of thumb: "A married couple will be only as strong as the weaker member."

The agency's official policies on Volunteer marriage and pregnancy do not contain any such value judgments. Although the Peace Corps recognizes that a couple's first responsibility is to the marriage, the agency emphasizes that marital problems should not be worked out overseas at the expense of the Peace Corps job.

The two policies, dating back to July, 1962, allow field staff to make

One out of five

A fifth of all current Peace Corps Volunteers are married. June figures show that most of them (2,748 out of a total of 2,793) are married to other Volunteers. Of this group, 1,254 couples were married before entering training, 34 couples married prior to overseas departure, and 86 couples married overseas. Of those Volunteers whose spouses are not enrolled in the Peace Corps, 34 are male Volunteers and 11 are female.

British Honduras has the leading percentage of married couples: 26 out of the 42 Volunteers there are married. At present, Gabon is the only Peace Corps country with no married couples, and only one couple has served there in the past. However, Gabon is scheduled to receive several married couples in a health project later this year.

Altogether, 6,665 married Volunteers have served or are serving in the Peace Corps; 780 of the marriages took place overseas.

As of July 31, a total of 150 babies had been reported born while their parents were serving as Volunteers.

Nigeria leads all Peace Corps countries with the most prolific Volunteers; 21 babies have been born to Volunteers serving there. Thailand is second with 13; next are Peru and Tanzania with a total of 10 each.

Wedding guests chat under lean-to built for rain protection. At left the Machi, witch doctor of Chilean Mapuche Indians, tends fire where she keeps "mate" (herb tea) boiling for serving.

The new Mr. and Mrs. Nat Goodhue (she is the former Gail Bakken), Volunteers in southern Chile, pose under garland of copihues, Chile's national flower which many guests brought as gifts. The Goodhues were married in a tent on the Indian reservation in the Andean foothills where they worked.

The Goodhue homestead, constructed by Nat and Gail on the Mapuche reservation. One week before the wedding, Gail's brother and Nat's cousin arrived from the U.S. and helped finish the building. The volcano Llaima glistens in background.

Photos by Kay Muldoon

case-by-case decisions to permit Volunteers anticipating marriage or parenthood to continue as Volunteers in the country. While the policies spell out the many considerations involved (host national relations; morale; medical, financial and legal factors), the ultimate criterion lies in the questions: Will the Volunteer, newly married, be able to perform his (her) Peace Corps duties effectively? Can the mother and/or father continue effectively as a Peace Corps Volunteer after the birth of a child?

Since 1962, various medical, legal and financial aspects of the policies have been further clarified. At one point, an amendment to permit the enrollment of married Volunteers with children under 18 was considered; then tabled. Currently, Volunteer doctors (who qualify as "Volunteer leaders" under the Peace Corps Act) are the only persons with dependents whom the Peace Corps can enroll as Volunteers.

The most recent policy change allows the Peace Corps to provide contraceptives and contraceptive advice to married trainees and Volunteers, upon their request, as part of their routine health care.

The time factor

Individual Peace Corps countries have further spelled out some aspects of the marriage and pregnancy policies to fit their program and medical situations. Several countries in Latin America (Brazil and Chile are examples) do not permit Volunteers to marry until they have been in the host country one year. Bolivia has a four-month "waiting" period. In many areas, married couples expecting a child are required to terminate their service and leave the host country before the child is born.

All policy amendments seek to keep the focus on a Volunteer's performance on the job.

There is little disagreement with this basic position.

"The Peace Corps should have first claim on your time," says a returned Volunteer who waited until his service had terminated before he married his Filipina fiancée.

Another staff member adds: "For *two* people to work out a new pattern is much harder than *one* making the adjustment to Peace Corps life."

On the following pages, married Volunteers—overseas and returned—give their views on married life in the Peace Corps.

'Those Who Have'

Photo by Dr. James Smith

Aided by a local health assistant, Volunteers Charles and Constance Davis give shots to Masai children as part of a vaccination project in Kenya.

By SUSAN CALL[illegible]N

Eskisehir, Turkey

Outside, the clammy dusk has settled down with a familiar dullness. Inside their neat little stucco house are Marsha and William, Married Volunteers. William is relaxing in the ingenious wood-sling chair with grass-mat seat that he designed and built. Marsha, wearing a version of the long native robe that *she* designed is busy in the kitchen creating miracles from powdered milk and goat meat. After dinner they look forward to a relaxing evening, perhaps a friendly game of scrabble or some quiet conversation and then, naturally, to bed. Tomorrow is a big day for them as they have been invited to the governor's yearly reception, a Peace Corps first. The governor must have been touched by the tender picture they present of young love, judiciously sanctified by law, braving life together. Ah! What wonders does love unfettered create, a veritable elixir of popularity and success. Or so it might seem to the Single Volunteer who has to go it alone, extracting "love" from letters and the ingenuity of his mind, admittedly a weak tonic.

But it would be a mistake to suggest that the Single Volunteer spends most of his time lamenting the pains of solitary living. The pioneer spirit lives on and he tends to look upon Married Volunteers as one might regard the possessor of the only umbrella in a sudden downpour; while readily acknowledging some envy for the coziness of the situation he is unable to resist a scornful snicker at the unadventurous practicality of such an all-weather security system. A brave and admirable stance but, unfortunately, the truth is inescapable. Relations between single and married people in normal situations are touchy enough, each one feeling the other to be annoyingly smug about his status. In the Peace Corps, however, this delicate balance of mutual resentment is destroyed, bachelor freedom being about as useful as an electric can-opener on the Anatolian Plateau. It becomes simply a case of "Those Who Have" and "Those Who Don't."

Things get abrasive right in the beginning in training, where all pretence to normalcy rapidly dissolves. Besides having to be generally sociable, the Single Volunteer must also devote himself tirelessly to a thorough but swift reconnaissance of the opposite sex, quite shrewdly lining up possible material for weekend contacts during those imminent two years of isolation. Meanwhile, married couples, buckling under the stress and strain of training, cling to each other fervidly, granted, more from desperation than passion. The Single Volunteer is not only put off by all this increased togetherness, it makes him indignant. Considering the situation, he finds these demonstrations of marital bliss more than unsporting; they seem to come from some nasty sadistic streak in these nice married people. One single girl has never quite forgiven a couple who used to snuggle during TEFL lectures, She putting her head on His shoulder and taking little naps. "Good grief!" sneered the shoulderless Single Volunteer. "We were all tired!"

Old wives' tale

However, Married Volunteers soon develop their own sore point, petulantly sulking each time they have to listen to what has now become part of the folk wisdom of the Peace Corps, that "married couples have it made" and "things go better if you're married." These ideas hurt the Married Volunteer's feelings, implying that somehow he has been insufficiently handicapped for the contest ahead, which will give the unpleasant aspect of dirty pool to any victory he may bumble into. So he is forced into blushingly denying all: "No sir, being married doesn't help a bit," and nobody believes him anyway. On the other hand, one young Volunteer husband's comment on the whole thing is enough to make anyone concerned for the future of matrimony: "Being married *here* is almost fun and it's really convenient," he said enthusiastically.

But back to William and Marsha. Things inside the little house aren't quite as euphoric as they seem. Marsha, after teaching an equal number of harrowing English classes as William, casts a cool eye at her husband lounging with the newspaper while she performs the womanly duties of cooking, cleaning, dishwashing and mending the underwear. Before the Peace Corps, William wasn't too bad, going to the laundromat and lugging groceries but now he blanches at the thought of being caught in such unmasculine activity. He has become acculturated to a new male role and rather likes it. Secretly, he thinks Marsha is becoming a shrew, even a nag. After all, he's the one who has to suffer through all the dealings with school officials, post office clerks and coal stoves, not to mention protecting her in public from overly bold stares. They are getting on each other's nerves.

Yet, Single Volunteers have roommate problems too. Besides, in a country like Turkey, it isn't so much

Photo by Dr. James Smith

Married, single PCVs show equal ability

The Cornell Peru Report, the only research document which compares the effectiveness of married and single Peace Corps Volunteers, concludes that there is no "statistically significant" difference in the contribution of the two groups.

The Cornell researchers, who studied the activities of Volunteers in the Peruvian Andes from 1962-64, note that married couples and single Volunteers displayed equal ability in starting organizations like clubs and co-ops or initiating the building of a new school. The married Volunteers proved "slightly more successful" in working with groups and organizations that had already been established, but this difference was not a significant one.

However, Peace Corps staff in Peru consistently rated single Volunteers higher than their married peers. One reason for this difference, say the researchers, might be that married couples were more conspicuously concerned with fixing up their homes. Example: "Peggy and Prescott spent a good deal of time fitting their rented sun-dried brick house with a well, pump, water storage and drainage system, latrine, kitchen, fireplace, adding a kitchen garden and rabbit hutches."

The Cornell Report concludes that the married couples' preoccupation with homemaking did not seriously interfere with their impact as Volunteers (in at least one case, "work-connected remodeling" proved advantageous). But homemaking endeavors were obvious enough to attract specific staff attention.

a case of being married or unmarried as of being male or female. Social life is still fairly segregated, men with men and women with women, which of course does not necessarily denote equality. Married or single, men are equally welcome to sit around the coffee house and women to sit through as many afternoon teas as they like. Being married does dispense with a few problems like suspicious fathers investigating the English teacher's intentions on his daughter or, for female Volunteers, fending off intrepid suitors who are deaf to discouraging words. In this kind of society, it's still the men who "have it made" if you take that to mean that they are taken relatively seriously and people listen to them. For the girls, it's a fight all the way, even more so for the married female Volunteer who finds herself regarded as only a reflection of her husband with no ideas of her own. This may be true but it is still a demeaning state of affairs.

One last myth to be mentioned, the one that has the Married Volunteers as sort of an oasis of warmth, good food and sociability which attracts Single Volunteers from miles around. Of course, there are a few couples like this, either unbelievably big-hearted or simply very mature but the average married couple finds themselves in need of some cheering diversion just as often as the Single Volunteer. The question of who takes care of whom is really a moot point.

Susan Calhoun and her husband, Robert, recently finished two years as teachers in Turkey. They were married 10 months before entering Peace Corps training in June, 1965. Both were VOLUNTEER *correspondents.*

A special k c

Married Volunteers may mark beginning of trend

A social scientist once divided the Peace Corps into three subcultures of Washington staff, overseas staff and Volunteers. The steadily growing percentage of married Volunteers suggests another subculture of the Peace Corps made up of Peace Corps couples. And if some forecasts made by anthropologist Margaret Mead come true, married Volunteers might be more than a subculture—they could be the first evidence of a larger social pattern.

Miss Mead's forecasts, contained in a speech in Washington last year, did not refer directly to the Peace Corps. But an application of her remarks to the agency suggests that the increasing percentage of married Peace Corps Volunteers did not just "happen," but actually reflects a social pattern born of a "new ethic" that will inspire, among other things, professional couples for overseas work. Here are some comments contained in her speech:

"It is possible that in the next 25 years we're going to see the development of highly trained, specialized, professional couples . . . we may be moving into a period when we are actively approving political couples, professional couples, technical couples and people who move around the world as families. Heaven knows, the children might get into this, too. We will be sending families abroad, not individuals, and we will be considering families for governors, maybe families for President, families for Congress, and families for important technical assignments overseas.

* * *

"The thing that is so predominant today is that everybody has got to be married . . . we're in a society that today is almost insistent on couples as the ark.

* * *

"Whether you look at the very simplest levels or at the very highest levels, people are being trained as specialists in Pakistan, or India, or West Africa or East Africa or southeast Asia . . . if women want to be there they better marry men who are going there. If you want to be a Near East specialist, go to a college that specializes in the Near East and learn Arabic and marry a boy who learned Arabic—that's the only way you're going to get anywhere near Arabia.

* * *

"Most of the people of the world . . . need teachers and health personnel. As long as we treat teachers and doctors and medical assistants and nurses as individuals we're never going to get anybody to stay in the country. . . . instead of dealing with individuals we've got to deal with couples. You can't send a 21-year-old girl into a Moslem society, into a strange village . . . if you send a 21-year-old boy all by himself you improve a lot besides health practices, and you get into a lot of trouble . . . if you look at the very simplest level of teaching in health all through the world we realize we're going to have to deal with couples.

* * *

"Now of course the federal government isn't very good at this (dealing with couples)—it has got a lot of rules about how you can't supervise your wife. I'm not sure what they think about supervising your husband—they probably never admitted that could happen, but here are all sorts of ridiculous nepotism rules that were all based on Irishmen getting off the boat, joining the police force in New York City and which spread all over the country and have nothing to do with anything."

al key to the community

By DEAN M. GOTTEHRER

Medellín, Colombia

There are many communities where single Volunteers are better able to meet the problems and try to effect changes. Some communities require single male Volunteers, others single female Volunteers and others a married couple to do the best job possible. All too often Peace Corps planning does not take into account the married Volunteers in terms of where they could be most effective as a team, rather than just as two Volunteers.

A good married couple is as strong as the sum of its parts. A husband and a wife complement each other's specialties and abilities in their work and sometimes make up for what is lacking in the other, not only in their relations with the community, but in the problems they might meet in themselves. They influence each other and the community they live in in a different and more complete fashion than single Volunteers sometimes can.

My wife and I met in training and we lived and worked in separate towns as single Volunteers before our marriage. Soon after our honeymoon we discovered that both of us were to be plugged into the community differently as a result of our marriage.

We had been in Colombia four months when we decided to announce our engagement. I was stationed in Rionegro, some five hours from Sheila's site at Yarumal. We saw each other only on those occasions when we were called into the departmental capital, Medellín. Since we both had few problems adjusting to overseas life and were both happy in our sites, we decided our marriage was not to be made from culture-shock-refuge-seeking (you are always afraid that being in the Peace Corps is an extraordinary situation which is drawing you together).

We settled in Rionegro, the site that afforded opportunities for both of us to continue work in educational television. Though the jobs remained the same, our relationship with the

Photos by Fred Baldwin

Michael Lee White was 16 days old when he was baptized in Penang, Malaysia last summer. Holding the baby is his father, Volunteer Charles White; his mother, Kay, also a Volunteer, is at far left. The Whites now reside in Western Samoa where Charles is associate Peace Corps director, and they are expecting another addition to the family soon.

community altered drastically. This quickly manifested itself one day, soon after we had returned from our honeymoon. I answered a knock on the door to greet three women whom I recognized as neighbors, but as far as I could figure out had no reason to be there but to look over the *gringo's* wife.

They were the beginning of a long procession of women visitors. In our town, as in many others, women visit each other often. In most instances it is natural because there is very little else for the women to do with the time they are not occupied with the children or household duties.

During my bachelor life in Rionegro, I had spent most of my evenings attending movies with friends, or sitting around the local bar and social center in the *plaza* to chat, or perhaps inviting some of the men up to play chess and converse.

Marriage broadened those relationships into a larger one with the community. In Colombia it is difficult, if not impossible, for a single male Volunteer to relate himself to families, especially if he is living alone, as I had been. There was no reason, for example, for the school director to bring his wife with him when he came to visit me when I was a bachelor. When I married, he brought his wife with him. In this manner, we related to a greater part of the community, in a way that neither one of us could do had we remained single.

Role of the wife

We also saw that the way we handled ourselves as a married couple influenced the Colombians. Colombians in Antioquia rarely take their wives when they go out to parties or to pay a social visit outside the family. With Sheila's encouragement, this changed. For many of our friends it was probably the first time they had gone to something other than a family social occasion or a religious event. In that respect, our presence and encouragement helped change the position of the wife.

Another way that we subtly affected the social structure of the family was in eating habits. Every time we invited people over to eat, we would serve a meal that was in many ways North American, but yet fit into the Colombian culture as well. When someone is invited for a meal, he will be served chicken as a sign of respect and honor (chicken was at one time more expensive than any kind of beef meat and is still more expensive than most cuts). So we served chicken cooked by U.S. recipes.

Sheila also prepared vegetables in a different way to make them more appetizing to our friends, and made desserts that were healthier than the sugary kinds of desserts Colombians were used to. Of course, the end of it all was a request for various recipes. Without trying to teach nutrition and without trying to Americanize Colombian eating habits, we managed to change some tastes in a healthier direction. Living alone as single people, we would have had greater difficulty in accomplishing this.

Perhaps the most interesting and, in terms of our ETV work, most important relation to the community was with our downstairs neighbors. The head of the family was a professor of math and physics in an industrial school. I began to get much more involved with him than I had been during my bachelor life. I had been friendly with the children before our marriage, but had found it difficult many times to get close to the little girl, Ana Maria, who was then five years old. Playing with Alejandro, then three years old, and Fernando, who was just starting to walk, was easy because as boys they were much more outgoing to me. Sheila, who was an elementary school teacher for a year before joining the Peace Corps, had an easier time relating to Ana Maria. Our relationships with the children and the family (we later became the godparents of the fourth child) brought us to realize many education problems. The imagination and inventiveness that we rarely, if ever, saw in elementary schools was seen in these pre-school children. But this relationship was something that would not have existed if I had not married; it would never have been as deep nor well-rounded without Sheila.

We feel that as a married couple we have managed to relate better to the community we are working in and with than we ever could have done as single Volunteers.

Dean M. Gottehrer, a VOLUNTEER *correspondent, and his wife, Sheila, are serving their third year as Volunteers in Colombia's educational television project.*

Training: no honeymoon retreat

By STEVE LAWRENCE

Samana, Dominican Republic

Volunteer Charles Murray and his Thai wife, Suchart, were married at the Ministry of Health in Bangkok, Thailand.

Peace Corps training gives married couples a short, hard look at their relationship; it puts a magnifying glass on the elements of being married. And the reactions to this magnification are as varied as the couples themselves.

The constants are tension and stress. Each couple learns to handle these in their own way. And hopefully they come to find out more about themselves in the process. Of course, the strengths of each couple and the security of being two, together, are reassuring in the harsh light of training. But the couples soon learn that their evaluating experience is multiplied by three: they have to consider themselves, their partner and their marriage. For most this exercise seems to strengthen the marriage.

A husband and wife have to look at the role each plays in their marriage. They have to consider themselves as individuals and try to see if they are suited for Peace Corps life. Few couples are equally motivated to join the Peace Corps and these differences must be reconciled too. Besides, couples find themselves up against a lot of problems they would have even if they had not come to training. These are just problems of day-to-day relating to each other, aggravated by tension, lack of privacy, and constantly being on the go.

One thing seems clear: Peace Corps training is a lousy place to spend a honeymoon. Newly married couples complain mostly about the lack of privacy. They want to be alone and training sites almost inevitably aren't geared for this sort of thing—training sites are not billed as honeymoon retreats anyway.

Obviously, much of training affects married couples in the same way it affects single trainees. Concentrated activity with little rest gets to everyone. And most trainees probably feel a bit paranoic by the time training ends: the "big brother is watching" aura of training is hard to shake. Also, most trainees see the Peace Corps a lot differently at the end of training. Much of what they read about the Peace Corps before training may seem a good deal unrealistic; most see the agency a lot more clearly as a functioning bureaucracy.

But while training may have a certain universal effect on all trainees, the status of being married complicates things. On the plus side, there is the togetherness and mutual understanding. Married people have each other so they can hassle over their conflicts and apprehensions together. On the other side are those magnified difficulties and doubts. Everyone has them in training, but for married couples they often surface in what might be called the "unit syndrome."

Loss of individuality

Couples often feel they are treated too much as a unit by the staff and trainees. They feel their individuality slipping away and begin looking for ways to recover it. Peer group ratings don't help much; trainees usually rate married couples as a unit. A vote against one vetoes the pair. So a couple's attention becomes focused on how the two behave as a unit. What the husband or wife says or does becomes important for what it will do for both of them. They become aware that the strengths of one could save them both. And likewise, the weaknesses of one could mean de-

Random thoughts

From Kenya, Sandra and Leslie Greenberg have this to say about being married Peace Corps Volunteers:

- We've agreed never to talk about work til after breakfast.
- All the travel together is great.
- When you've had a really lousy day, you go home and relax and spout off about it. It can be a bit of a problem when there across the dinner table is the person who may have contributed the most to making it a lousy day.
- By working together, we better understand each other and each other's work.

selection for both. A peculiar sort of frustration grows out of the feeling that one's future is tied inextricably to the behavior of someone he or she doesn't control.

The selection process seems to enlarge this problem. Husbands and wives want to be seen and accepted as individuals, so they may overcompensate in that direction. This desire can be seen in a husband who becomes more aggressive and hence more noticeable. And this may further complicate things because one or both may believe that becoming more noticeable is bad for the unit. In the end, probably all of this tends simply to deaden spontaneity. At the same time, a sense of constantly being on trial may produce a rebellious, "what the hell" attitude in a lot of married trainees.

Common problems

While individualism pulls one way, the need for what might be called "balanced togetherness" pulls another. If they are in the least prone toward self-consciousness, a husband and wife can become very sensitive to how much time they are spending with each other. They don't want to appear over-dependent upon each other. At the same time, husbands and wives can get touchy if they feel they are being ignored by one another.

Probably no one couple will fall prey to all of these problems. But more than likely, every couple runs up against at least one of them during training. Certainly many of these problems are common to marriages in general and not peculiar to the Peace Corps. If a couple doesn't have some of these conflicts already, it is doubtful that training and Peace Corps service will create them. The Peace Corps doesn't throw too many curves at married couples. But it does give them a chance to air out their relationship.

VOLUNTEER *correspondent Steve Lawrence and his wife, Linda, celebrated their first wedding anniversary in Peace Corps training. They have been community developers in the Dominican Republic for more than a year. For his article, Lawrence pooled the thoughts of other married couples in the country.*

Where security might be a risk

By **BOB PEARSON**

Whether being married while in the Peace Corps is an advantage or a disadvantage depends on two things—individual personality and host country culture.

The most obvious benefit would seem to be the opportunity for mutual support between husband and wife. However, this very strength could in some cases prove to be a weakness. The stability a Volunteer might feel as a result of his marriage could insure that he would "stick it out" overseas, but it could also gravitate against extraordinary achievement on his part.

In this sense, the single Volunteer's relative instability could be his greatest asset; as he is alone in the host country, he might, out of sheer loneliness, feel a much greater need to learn the host country language and to find friends in the host country community than the married Volunteer who has company as well as re-responsibilities at home.

This is not to imply that marriage is not usually an advantage in Peace Corps work, for, especially at first, it may speed up involvement in a community, particularly in Moslem countries where the status of a Volunteer couple is known and respected from the start. A couple is not only more stable in reality, it is viewed as such by the host country community.

Volunteer Carla Maness marries Mohammed Kassim Zainie, the police inspector in Kuching, Malaysia, in a traditional ceremony held at the groom's house. According to custom, the bride and groom are enthroned as king and queen for the day in rites lasting several hours.

In my own case, being married was, from almost every perspective, an advantage. In the first place, there is some question whether or not either my wife or I would have joined the Peace Corps had we not been married. I was ready to do something exciting and different, to test my mettle, and might well have hitch-hiked around the world or gone to Europe to live had I not been married. My wife, Rosalind, being somewhat less inclined to jump into things than I, probably would have stayed in graduate school. The fact that we were married, then, tempered our average inclinations so that when it came time to make a decision, we, in a sense, compromised by deciding that some kind of structure for going overseas was necessary.

I have heard some couples say that training was a difficult time for them as they felt they were constantly being compared and contrasted, and in response became strongly competitive. Fortunately, in our case the opposite occurred, for having both been American Literature majors in college and graduate school, we had already gone through a certain amount of personal competition. In contrast, our Peace Corps training personnel assumed that all of us were mature enough to go about learning on our own, and grades and interpersonal competition were held to a minimum. Individuals were allowed to assess their own progress, and despite a high degree of structure, felt little necessity to produce or impress in a final-exam time sense.

Once we were overseas, of course, my wife and I gave each other a great deal of support. I can remember one case in particular when having a wife to talk to at the very least saved me a trip to the Peace Corps director. I had just given my first three months' exam, and after giving absolutely all I had as a teacher for those three months, the best my students could muster were a few illegible chicken scratches. I came home shattered, for I had always considered myself a fairly good teacher. All afternoon I could only stare at those pathetic papers. But my wife was having similar problems, and we were able to console each other. Ultimately, with her support, I was able to experiment with my classroom problems in new and somewhat unorthodox ways.

My wife and I could also use each other as sounding boards, to test ideas, to complain to, to talk English with. And we could make a home together. Because we were married and were a family unit, there was a mutual desire to have the home in order, to have three good meals a day, to have rugs on the floor, to keep the wood and sawdust for our heaters in place; in short, to provide an order in our lives that served as a settling influence in the midst of what often was an incon-

Why some couples join

Some married couples join the Peace Corps partly to avoid problems in their marriage, says Dr. Gene Gordon, acting chief psychiatrist for the Peace Corps.

And, he points out, the Peace Corps is the last place to work out marital difficulties.

"The Peace Corps in general provides the potential for quicker disillusionment for married couples than our own culture does," Dr. Gordon says. "Many couples have told me that in the Peace Corps their marriage became established on a more intimate and profound basis. But I have also talked with couples who faced an intense and premature confrontation with more problems than marriages can survive."

In American culture, removed from the pressures of Peace Corps service, married couples are better able to work out their problems gradually, says Dr. Gordon. In the Peace Corps, they are handicapped with "extra disillusionment."

"When you are married, your problems in coping are doubled," Dr. Gordon goes on. "You are vulnerable not only for yourself, but also for someone else. There are a number of people who could make it through the Peace Corps very well on their own, but their service suffers because of their spouses.

"Often one member of the duo has been dragged into the Peace Corps by the other," he continued. In any case, the degree of motivation of both spouses is never identical. Some married couples who see problems arising in their marriages, such as disagreement about when or whether to have a child, use Peace Corps service as a temporary solution.

Further, Dr. Gordon feels that one good reason many single people go into the Peace Corps is, in most cases, a bad reason for married couples to join. This is the personal identity problem—the "Who am I?", "Where do I want to go?" questions that single persons often hope to find answers for in the Peace Corps.

Dr. Gordon is troubled by married couples who join the Peace Corps with those same questions. "Marriage should substantially be a result, a confirmation of the establishment of your identity. The young man of mythology embarks on his quest alone; it's a sign of the end of the quest when he slays the dragon and marries the princess—and settles down. **After** you've found yourself, you marry," he says. "Married couples who are preoccupied with these questions are still single at heart.

"Married persons ought to, and ought to be pushed to do, a lot of hard thinking about themselves and their marriage before joining the Peace Corps," Dr. Gordon concluded.

gruent relationship with the society around us. Whatever our disorientation outside our compound wall, we had a place of our own within, a place of solitude and of familiar objects to come back to for revitalization. Though a considerably greater burden for maintaining this order rested upon my wife, due to natural inclination as well as the normal husband-wife functions, I think it was equally beneficial to both of us, for it gave my wife a familiar and satisfying role and provided me with some certainty in my day-to-day living.

In contrast, I understand that in some cases, single Volunteers, due to the stresses of their environment, let their personal lives get out of hand, and I think that had I not been married this could easily have happened to me. This phenomenon, to some degree, is an extension of what often happens in college. Meals become a bother, so breakfast is cut out, and lunch and dinner are thrown together out of a can. Cleaning becomes boring, so things are left out of place. As the life outside begins to wear, the life inside follows suit. This spiral downward is difficult to stop and often ends in despair; things become perpetually out of joint. When such a process begins in the Peace Corps, listlessness and absenteeism may be early symptoms leading to resignation or illness.

Some limitations

Being married may thus have saved us from some of these forms of disorientation. On the other hand, it may have limited our individual mobility and limited the degree to which we became involved in the host country culture. As we were English teachers, we were already speaking English half the day; when we came home we obviously continued to speak English. There was no possibility of our living with a host country family, and our easiest and most convenient social relationships were with ourselves at home. There was no immediate and urgent compulsion to seek out relationships with host country families or individuals. We, of course, had many Afghan friends and were involved in many activities, but what I am referring to is total submersion in another culture and another language; the kind of total experience most of us expected, I think, when we joined the Peace Corps.

I'm not sure, in retrospect, that either of us could have taken this kind of total submersion, for there are only a handful of Volunteers that I know of who have been able to do it in Afghanistan. But there is always the question, could either of us have done it had we been alone and single in a small town or village? The idea of complete fluency in a language and understanding of a culture from within, rather than from without, haunts most of us, I think, even after we have come back from an overseas tour.

In other ways, Rosalind, too, was to some degree inhibited from joining the feminine community, for there I was not welcome, and she, of course, had certain obligations to me and the home. She could not stay at school for lunch or over at a friend's house indefinitely, for I would come home expecting a meal. And I could not roam with my soccer players for similar reasons.

Thus, the married Volunteer's center of gravity cannot help but rest in the marriage itself, and the Volunteer's involvement with the community grows out of the marriage. The single Volunteer, on the other hand, having no primary allegiance, has the option

Peggy and Mike Ezzell stroll past their home in the village of Kapingamarangi, in the Ponape district of the Caroline Islands. Mike is a recreation leader and Peggy teaches English as a second language.

of a kind of marriage with the host country culture, an involvement which orders his life not on American but on host country principles. The single Volunteer's existence, then, could involve more risks and be less stable, for at best it is a marriage of two cultures and, according to the extent of the involvement, depends on a successful integration of both.

Bob Pearson is operations officer for Afghanistan. He and his wife were married for a year before they joined the first group of Volunteers to go to Afghanistan. They served there from 1962-64.

Photo by Carl Purcell

Interpreting problems of love, marriage and pregnancy

Love and marriage in the Peace Corps nearly always involves a third party—the overseas staff person. Rare is the staff man who has never been in the role of counselor, judge, interpreter or arbiter in the realms of marriage and pregnancy.

Policies call for case-by-case decisions by the field staff on whether newly married or pregnant Volunteers may effectively continue their Peace Corps service, and judgments on the even more subtle variables of making marriage decisions in the first place.

Aware of the importance of staff understanding in this area, the Staff Training Center in Washington attempts to orient new field staff for decision making. In addition to studying specific policy information, novice staff members consider hypothetical situations which might arise, including the sensitivities involved and the alternatives available to them in dealing with these situations.

Following are three case studies prepared by the center for discussion of Volunteer marriage:

Barbara comes into your office and announces her forthcoming marriage to a host country national. She says she realizes that you are going to do all you can to try to throw cold water on her plans and warns you that you might as well save your breath. She says she is determined in this course, and nothing anyone can say or do will stop her.

* * *

You are making the rounds to visit a group of Volunteers who will be coming in for their end-of-tour conferences in three months. You are just about to arrive at John's site. Not long ago he wrote and asked your permission to marry a 17-year-old local girl and he will want your answer today.

John is a quiet, shy Volunteer who came into the Peace Corps right after college. You don't think he'd ever been outside the state of North Carolina before. The girl doesn't speak any English, from what the Volunteers in the neighboring town said, and according to them she seems young and immature. "Old John is really robbing the cradle this time," one of them said. They also added that, like many Latin American girls, she is tied very closely to her family. It sounds to you like she might have a hard time adjusting in the States.

Should you give your consent? You're wondering whether John really loves the girl or whether he's just been away from home too long. You can always tell him to wait a few months until his Peace Corps term is over but he'll want to know why you gave another Volunteer permission to marry last month. If you told him to wait, would that really be just avoiding the situation and not coming face to face with it? What will you tell him if he asks your advice or if he just flatly asks for your permission?

* * *

You have a young married Volunteer with problems. In your opinion he needs professional help—either a psychiatrist or a marriage counselor. His wife is the stronger of the two, and is doing a great job as a Volunteer nurse. This, of course, makes the husband even more morose, because he knows he doesn't have whatever is necessary to be a good Volunteer.

The couple comes to you with their problem, prompted perhaps by the growing pressure to produce put on the husband by your field staff. He asks if the Peace Corps has a psychiatrist or a marriage counselor he can talk with. You know Medical has a psychiatrist, and you also think that Peace Corps Washington provides a certain amount of marriage counseling. The husband wants to go to Peace Corps Washington to talk with these people. The wife agrees and you cable Peace Corps Washington for its concurrence.

A partial answer to the question

'Where have all the RPCVs gone?'

In the Peace Corps lexicon of famous last words, a question contained in the first and only edition of *The Returnee* deserves a special niche. It read: "Where two returned Volunteers get together, can a newsletter be far behind?"

Quite far behind, apparently. The negative response to the newsletter doomed the agency-inspired publication early in 1966, and seemed to confirm the antipathy toward formal organization that was articulated at the 1965 Returned Volunteer Conference. Since then the Peace Corps has limited its labors among former Volunteers to routine career information services, such as job conference invitations, an occasional plug for the School Partnership Program, distribution of Sargent Shriver's remembrance pin (which elicited more mail, inquiries and thank yous, than any other inspiration of, by or for returned Volunteers) and, for those who want it, a free subscription to THE VOLUNTEER.

Voices in the wilderness

Yet the organization boosters, the minority voices of 1965, are being heard and heeded in distant corners of the land. There is a possibility that they will prevail. The notion persists that some form of national association or federation (pooh-poohed as "Veterans of Foreign Non-Wars" or "Veterans of Foreign Peace" by the anti-organizationals) will be set up, and the idea is fed by a growing proliferation of local organizations. More former Volunteers are getting together in more places for a greater variety of purposes than ever before, some in the name of the Peace Corps and some in the name of other causes.

In earlier days former Volunteers tended to focus their collective efforts on such tasks as assisting foreign students to adjust to the United States, and aiding the recruiting of new Volunteers and consulting with applicants. But other aggregate functions have also emerged. One group has been organizing a training corporation. Another group has launched a research foundation. In at least two cities, Detroit and Boston, former Volunteers have put out newsletters ("Home Front News" and "Ex Press," respectively), and in Detroit and elsewhere they have participated in agency-supported service councils. Three or four groups, possibly more, have been circulating petitions and position papers on world affairs.

New directions seen

Francis Pollock, writing in *The Nation*, detects a new thrust of former Volunteers in the political sphere. Pollock, a former Volunteer, points out that "while every indication is given that they are highly conscious politically, they have unquestionably been slow to consider collective action." Pollock thinks the conditions for group action are favorable and pays special attention to the Committee of Returned Volunteers (which includes non-Peace Corps veterans of overseas service), along with the Ad Hoc Committee for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Letter on Vietnam (sic) and the Former Peace Corpsmen's Committee for Peace. These New York-based groups have devoted most of their efforts to position papers and petitions on Vietnam, though the Committee of Returned Volunteers has set up regional working committees to deal with other foreign policy matters.

Pollock concludes that prospects of these and other organizations of overseas Volunteers "look encouraging, if not bright." He says: "If a national association is possible it would more likely than not be patterned along the lines of the present Committee of Returned Volunteers: study groups in a number of cities, loosely joined in a national federation."

Group influence

It remains to be seen whether politically oriented associations will gain momentum among former Volunteers, who traditionally have prided themselves on their individualism and divergent viewpoints. Another interesting aspect of former Volunteer organizations is the degree and kind of influence that they seek to exert on the Peace Corps itself. The politically minded groups have demonstrated inclinations in this direction. The Committee of Returned Volunteers has suggested writing letters to Peace Corps headquarters; two members of the Former Peace Corpsmen for Peace picketed headquarters protesting the dismissal of a Volunteer who spoke out at home and abroad concerning his political views on Vietnam (see Page 2).

Politics or no, it is safe to predict a continuance of the current trend of former Volunteers to associate. There will soon be more returned Volunteers than current Volunteers. In some places they can't, or don't want to, avoid each other. Like the Agency for International Development (which at latest count had 177 former Volunteers on the payroll), or Warren Wiggins' TransCentury Corporation, or the graduate schools, or the Peace Corps itself (continuing home of the anti-organization former Volunteer population). Sooner or later, somebody out there among them is going to sound off about the "numbers game" in the United States, somebody else is going to tackle the "image" problem of former Volunteers, and still somebody else will expand the cultural delineation of the Peace Corps with a book about the "fourth subculture" of former Volunteers. For the present, however, the evidence suggests little more than a question: Is there a movement stirring in the breasts of returned Volunteers?

Film maker Paul Freundlich's initial involvement with the Peace Corps was as co-director of its first major self-produced film, "A Choice I Made." Since then he has produced, directed, photographed and edited half a dozen more films for the agency. In the following interview, conducted by editors of THE VOLUNTEER, Freundlich discusses the history and potential of film in the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps on film

Q. How would you describe the changes in Peace Corps films, from *A Choice I Made*, to the present?

A. There is a major difference here, simply in what the Peace Corps is interested in seeing on film. That's partially a result of the changing preoccupations of the Peace Corps and it is also relevant to what the films accomplish. Films do answer some questions; you don't have to keep remaking the same film.

There was a great curiosity as to what the overseas reality was in 1964 when *A Choice I Made* went into production. The idea of doing a film that attempted to get at the subjective reality of being a Peace Corps Volunteer was very exciting for everybody concerned, and to the extent this film succeeded in giving a sense of what it felt like to be a Volunteer in a foreign land, it didn't have to be done again.

Then David Schickele's *Give Me A Riddle* showed that a Volunteer could really break through the cultural barriers. He is there for a couple of years —he interacts with the community, he does a job, but does he really become a part of the community, does he really reach these people, can he become one of them? Individual Volunteers knew these answers, subjectively, but the discussion back in Washington could have raged for another 20 years. I think that discussion ended with Schickele's film.

Of course, most films about the Peace Corps are going to touch on these questions, but now simply as a part of the Volunteer's total experience.

Q. What other problems do you anticipate might be treated in film?

A. To me there is really only one problem: The reality of the Volunteer in the field and the problem of doing justice to that reality. To the extent that every Volunteer's experience is individual and to the extent that the Peace Corps and the world change, that problem changes.

But there is a second problem of how to make the experience of a Volunteer relevant to a preconceived question. That sounds bad—and it could be. For instance, if the questions were, "How do we make the Volunteers in this picture look good? Clean cut? Positive? Successful?"—regardless of the reality. Or, "How do we make the movie entertaining?"—regardless of the reality. On the other hand, the question could be, "What elements in the Volunteer's experience are most relevant to training future Volunteers?"

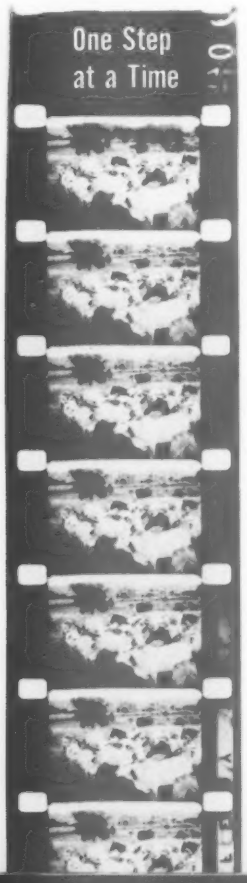
In any case, the second problem will usually be the reason why the films get financed—because somebody's worried about something. But if the film maker is good, and if the film is worth anything beyond that immediate anxiety, it will speak to the first question of, "What is the reality?"

and the finished picture will inform all concerned more fully and more deeply than they had expected.

As to what those specific questions troubling Peace Corps staff might be—that's not what I'm primarily interested in.

Q. What is your primary interest at this stage?

A. In the past we've mostly made films for limited audiences, for limited reasons. We've made films for recruiting, for training, for this or that to satisfy a specific purpose . . . the problem is to make films for the total Peace Corps; a Peace Corps which includes potential Volunteers, trainees, Volunteers in the field, returned Volunteers, as well as for recruiters, training staff, Washington staff and field staff—and to a degree, for anyone who has ever been turned on by the idea of the Peace Corps. I certainly hope that my films have helped to recruit and train Volunteers. But more than that, they serve as basic source documents. I think my films and Dave Schickele's film, to the extent they've been seen, help to create an internal dialogue within the total Peace Corps.



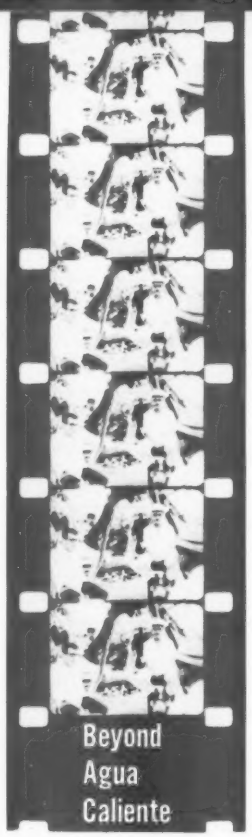
Because the crucial experience of the Peace Corps is that Volunteer in that community . . . that's what needs to be on film. To the extent that any person is separated from a physical confrontation with that reality, he is less able to carry out his work, which is directly or indirectly the work in the field, less caring about his tasks, less curious, less imaginative, less thorough. You can talk objective facts all you want, but that's not what the Peace Corps is all about—this whole spirit of voluntarism is a subjective reality. There is no Peace Corps unless people all along the line are committed, involved, engaged with this ideal, this élan which made the Peace Corps exciting from the beginning. There is a tendency to think that because the Peace Corps was exciting in the beginning, we can count on continued enthusiasm. There is a tendency to think that once we've signed somebody up—Volunteers or staff—the inspiration goes on for the rest of his life. That's not the way human beings work. The initial motivation needs reinforcement. I think the best reinforcement is a strong dose of reality. And for the people who are part of that total Peace Corps, but who are not in the field in constant confrontation with that reality, I think the best way to communicate that reality is film.

Q. Specifically, how would a film be used within your concept?

A. Well, recruiting for a start. That's an obvious use . . . what may not be so obvious is the effect I think a good film has on the recruiters.

A film gives them a relevant Peace Corps experience about which they can be objective. Otherwise, they constantly have to call on their own experience as Volunteers.

And they're talking on a college campus, a long way from the world of the Peace Corps. A pre-condition for convincing anyone is an emotional disposition to be convinced. So if you have a film which for half an hour or an hour, in a darkened room, puts you into that Peace Corps reality, then at the end of it the recruiter and audience are a little closer to having the same frame of reference. Not only is the audience primed, but the recruiter can go about the work of providing information, instead of being called on for an emotional confrontation from every student who wants to know what it's really like.



Q. Where else?

A. For a less obvious use, take the staff man in Washington. The higher ranking staff gets out to the field with some regularity, but for people on the middle and lower levels, traveling is very occasional, if at all. I know returned Volunteers who haven't been out of the building in a couple of years. There are a lot of people who've never been overseas. Now I think most of the people who join the Peace Corps staff start out with a commitment to the idea. But you get in one of those offices, and all you've got in front of you are papers, and other people in your office and other offices, and that becomes your reality. The fact that each of these papers in some way stands for some part of that final Peace Corps reality in the field—you may believe it, but it becomes increasingly difficult to work in a way that expresses that commitment. So the staff in Washington needs film as source material, for personal reflection, for discussion. We need the reality to measure against the abstract—with the hopeful end result being pertinence.

As we have longer training programs, I think training will have a

greater need for film—for the same reasons as the staff. Of course, if you have your trainees off in a slum on a site problem, you're not going to drag them in to see a movie about something happening half way around the world. But there must be moments in every training program when everybody is stale, when a new take-off point is needed. That's where you use a film which doesn't address itself to any specific problem or question—but which presents the reality, to provoke the widest range of response.

Also, the Volunteers in the field need a wider experience. Very often they get tied down to day-to-day activities—they could use a wider view of what's happening. They need to understand that not only do they have their own problems, but there are Volunteers 6,000 miles away who have the same sort of problems, or different problems. They need this kind of exchange.

Q. You're saying we should send films overseas?

A. Yes. Of course, I'm not talking about films alone. The problem is to vitalize communication in the whole organization. There are a lot of things. Your publication is one of them, obviously, where you attempt to do basically the same thing, to give everybody in the organization a sense of what's happening, but primarily what's happening in the field. Everything is geared to the field.

Q. What is the best way in which film could translate the reality of the field?

A. That is the smallest problem. You can go to almost any Volunteer and make a major documentary. You wouldn't even have to have a particular idea in mind, beyond dealing as strongly and in as much depth as you possibly could with what was happening with this particular Volunteer. What's happening with him? What's his work situation? What's his life like? His relations with the community? What is the roundness of his experience? If you can put that on film, then you've got something that is emotionally and informationally valid for anybody, at least in the Peace Corps. Then this becomes a source document.

Q. What are some of the problems of making a film overseas?

A. I shot *This Land* in three days, and that's no way to shoot a movie. *A Choice I Made* took 2½ months. You're getting closer there. You need time to find out; you can't just walk into a situation and get involved. I was lucky in Kenya because Dan Ritchie was a very articulate Volunteer. I was able to see the situation much more quickly through him. But sometimes a Volunteer doesn't know what's happening. Sometimes he's embarrassed by what's happening. Sometimes he is proud of what's happening but doesn't believe that anybody coming in from the outside would appreciate it; maybe he's been spoiled by people coming in and saying things like, "How many bridges have you built?" That isn't done so much now, I guess. But the people who were asking objective questions like that are now hip and they come out to the site and they say, "How many personal contacts did you make?" You can quantify anything. And that makes Volunteers dubious about anyone coming in. Add a movie camera and everyone develops suspicions. There have been just too many films and photographers who have exploited the situation.

The two most popular movies in Peace Corps history have been "A Choice I Made" and "Mission of Discovery." The Office of Public Affairs says that they have had a combined total of more than 80,000 showings, and they are still on the circuit.

But they are not the only films available within the agency. There are 42 different films currently in use, ranging from amateur Volunteer movies to professional productions and television documentaries. Primary uses are in training and recruiting.

Q. There has been some interest on the part of Volunteers in making movies, and you've worked closely with some of them. What potential do you think Volunteer-produced efforts have in this direction? Does the amateur have the ability to translate the Peace Corps this way?

A. I haven't seen it yet. The Volunteer has the advantage of being in the situation for an extended period of time, and knowing it in a way different from anyone coming in from the outside. But film is a very complex medium. And that's not to take anything away from Bennett Oberstein and Warren Wood (who made *One Step at a Time*)—they did a very nice survey in Brazil. But the only thing they did differently from any professional going in is that they shot a picture at roughly half of my cost, and probably a quarter the cost of an ordinary crew coming in under contract. It's an entertaining and honest survey; that's all they ever meant it to be. But the challenge is to make a film with some depth that really says something about the Peace Corps experience. No Volunteer has done this yet. The film Volunteers made in the Ivory Coast was a nice little film about a summer project and they virtually finished it by themselves, but again it didn't really have any depth to it.

Q. We're seeing a greater emphasis on films everywhere.

A. Certainly. Particularly in the society out of which the Volunteers come, which is mostly your collegiate society.

Q. With this group, is film the best medium for communicating recruiting and training messages, compared with person-to-person contact?

A. Film is a very satisfactory medium; it is not the only one. In many cases person-to-person interaction is essential, especially if you have one of those rare people who can get up there and talk about his experiences and communicate some of the enthusiasm. It's great if you have film to back this guy up but basically he can do it on his own. As for informing people, I think you can get hung up trying to communicate too much information on film. Sometimes a pamphlet or a sheet of paper might do a better job at a hundredth of the cost. Film is hardly going to answer everything. But it can give people a sense of the Peace Corps reality.

Q. Do Peace Corps films really say something new or do they repeat the same information in a different medium, the messages of the training manuals, the recruiting brochures, and so on?

A. They're not repeating anything. Even if you said the same objective thing in film, it comes out differently. It's different because you're *there*. If there had been a shooting script of *This Land* it would tell you everything about how the White Highlands were turned over to the people of Kenya through the land settlement project, and how the Peace Corps became involved and what the Peace Corps is doing. But it is not at all the same as looking through the Volunteer's eyes, as being there and seeing these highlands. It's not even a conscious one plus one. It's a different reality, an experience that you go through, assuming you're interested enough to open yourself to the film.

Q. Don't different audiences need different films?

A. I've had discussions with a lot of people on this about *A Choice I Made*. In many ways this was a negative film; it has a pretty strong ending but it shows a lot of Volunteers having problems of some kind. There was a very big discussion as to whether this film should be used for recruiting at all because it did show so many problems. But I think it's been a good recruiting film, though maybe not every place (and assuming there is a good projector so you can understand the sound track).

The basic problem is to make the strongest film you can and then figure out its distribution.

Q. Should Peace Corps stick to general all-purpose films or specialized films?

A. General films, as long as we don't try to say everything in each film—I guess films which deal with particular situations but at sufficient depth and length so as to become something of a universal statement. I think the only all-encompassing film which makes sense is the one I just finished, *The Great Dessie Marching Band*, which is 15 minutes of montage, just film from all over the world with music.

Q. So far we have talked mostly about films to be used inside the house. What is the potential for mass market films about the Peace Corps, say like *ZinZin Road*?

A. We'll get Natalie Wood to play a Peace Corps Volunteer, and Sidney Poitier will play a local official and in reel six they'll almost marry . . .

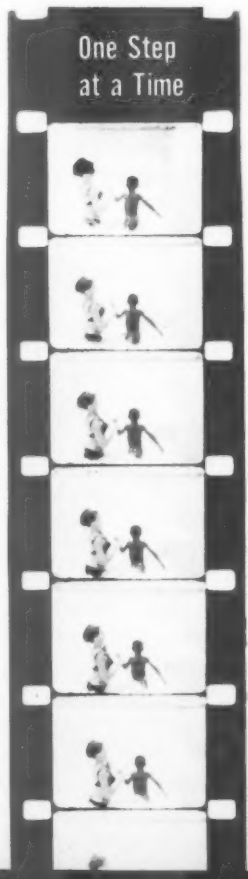
The Peace Corps is great material for dramatic film. Unfortunately, most of the people working in commercial television are interested in making dramatically appealing stories. There are not many Volunteers or staff who would want to have the sort of treatment that would be handled in a half hour or hour series. And if educational television got hold of it I think they'd start quantifying again, trying to be very objective.

It is frequently difficult to attract collegians to Peace Corps movies. But recruiter Mike Riley came up with an unusual but effective solution at the University of New Mexico.

Riley advertised that a film would be shown for a price of $2 per person. He then picked up a batch of coat checks and distributed them at the recruiting booth as complimentary tickets. The result? Two hundred viewers for one showing.

Q. What about sticking with a whole program from its beginning, or starting with a trainee and carrying him through two years in the field and back home?

A. This is the way to do a film, but I'm not sure anybody is going to do it. It takes too much of a commitment. You're talking about $150,000 or



$200,000. And I don't know where that kind of money will come from. What I think we should be doing at this point, realistically, is one major film each year, a film that is at least attempting to make a major statement about the Peace Corps. The last film that tried this was *Give Me a Riddle*. Before that was *A Choice I Made*. There are only two.

Q. What major statement could you anticipate now?

A. There are a couple I'd like to make. The one we're talking about now is about Peace Corps staff overseas. It's very important but it is one of these specialized works. Beyond that, I'd like to go into a community where there are a couple of Peace Corps Volunteers, stay there for a few months, get a sense of their lives, the relationships of these people, and make a film about a community, with the Volunteers viewed as one element of that community.

There's no reason why a film of this nature, that attempts to deal dramatically and in depth about the Peace Corps, couldn't go for a Peace Corps audience in the very widest sense, which would be, hopefully, a mass audience. I think Schickele's film is far more viewable than most of the dramatic films I see coming in from either the U.S. or from Europe. It's a good film, period, and there are many more of this calibre to be made.

The problem, again, is in the initial conception of the film. *A Choice I Made* was done with vision. People like David Gelman were in that project all the way because they felt it was important and film was a great medium and should be used to make the strongest possible statement about the Peace Corps, not because it was to be used for recruiting, or for training, or for staff, but because it was critical for the total Peace Corps. It was widely used in training, recruiting, and staff orientation; also for the general public, and was sent to the field. Some of the others haven't been seen that widely because they weren't made with the total Peace Corps in mind. Most of my films have been made for specific reasons, like *This Land*, which was made because a short recruiting film was needed. The crucial decision is whether you're going to deal in as great a depth, in as great a length as you need, as honestly as you possibly can, with what's out there.

Volunteers leave Eastern Region of Nigeria

All 139 Volunteers working in Nigeria's former Eastern Region were withdrawn late in July three weeks after fighting broke out between Federal forces and those of the breakaway Republic of Biafra.

About 95 of the Volunteers transferred to other African programs in the largest such movement in the Peace Corps' six years.

The withdrawal followed the sudden closing of schools in the East—leaving most of the Volunteers without jobs—and was in accordance with recommendations from both Federal and Eastern authorities.

More than 100 of the Volunteers arrived July 21 in Lagos aboard an Italian cargo-passenger ship which had been sent to Port Harcourt in the East to remove about 600 British, American and other foreign nationals. Several other Volunteers had left the East earlier by land.

In Lagos, most of the Volunteers chose to go on to Accra, Ghana, for staging and transfer, while others exercised their option to terminate. Reassignments were made to Tanzania (19), Uganda (12), Somalia (9), Malawi (9), Liberia (20), Togo (6), Cameroon (4), Kenya (4), Ghana (2), Botswana (2) and one each to Chad, Niger, and Senegal. Four Volunteers re-enrolled for tours in Micronesia.

C. Payne Lucas, Deputy Regional Director for Africa who supervised the transfer operation, said the Volunteers "performed outstandingly under continuous pressure."

Peace Corps goes to Dahomey

A new Peace Corps program will begin in December in the West African nation of Dahomey. Director Jack Vaughn announced that a group of 20 Volunteers will work in agricultural development there. Dahomey is a former French colony which achieved independence in 1960.

LETTERS TO THE VOLUNTEER

Ring of authority

To The Volunteer:

300 cheers for the June issue of The Volunteer. The three articles by host countries are a refreshing and healthy change from "in-house" analyses. If we've to deal with "felt needs" these sources are a better guideline for voluntarism than all our own interpretations. They have a ring of authority, not philosophy.

Roger Vaughan

Adeje, Nigeria

Anti-criticism?

To The Volunteer:

I have just received the June edition. It must be published on Madison Avenue, such a wonderful image it presents: criticism of the Peace Corps by former and present Volunteers, and by foreigners, no less.

Yet what does all this mean? Nothing, except that the Peace Corps wishes to have a good, liberal image. A year ago I attended a meeting of returned Volunteers where we were addressed by a staff member from Washington. Not only did he refuse to give satisfactory answers to our questions, but he finally told us that he didn't care what we said or thought —we had nothing to do with what was done; our opinions were irrelevant. Sure, the Peace Corps likes criticism; it's something to ignore— whether from anti-Peace Corps people or from very concerned Volunteers.

Bruce A. Cronnell
Former Volunteer

Los Angeles, Calif.

The worst sin

To The Volunteer:

"Applying PPBS to motherhood" (June) conveyed to me nothing so much as the fact that analogies break down. And if part of the article's intent was to reassure those who question applying PPBS' quantification system to Peace Corps efforts, the "comfy, cozy" comparison with motherhood could only further exaggerate existing concerns.

Wouldn't the best course really be to say that PPBS forces field staff to do better (i.e. more significant, in light of what is, or should be, known about the country in which the Peace Corps is operating) programming? And that the Bureau of the Budget is more than willing to accept as valid Peace Corps operations those attempts at social change which are so difficult to measure as against, say, miles of road built?

Poor programming has always been the worst sin committed against Volunteers, and official (and what is more official than the Bureau of the Budget) recognition of Volunteers' efforts in the field of social change should be worth more to any Volunteer than telling him what he's up to is something like, and presumably as good as, motherhood.

Carl Ehmann

San Juan, Puerto Rico

The writer is a former Volunteer and former staff member of the Peace Corps in Washington.

One return

To The Volunteer:

In Tanga, Tom Steppe built a road with the help of a large turnout of self-help labor. The volunteer labor stayed to finish the job, as is rarely the case. He was in Kigoma during the Muleliste revolt across Lake Tanganyika in the Congo and managed to stay there until re-posted, despite a strong anti-American wave and threats to his personal safety. Tom was a quiet-spoken, intelligent person with the capacity to get along well with all kinds of people, and the proven good sense to know when to get out of their way.

The experiences of Peace Corps Volunteers abroad give them insights into ways of getting along with persons from outside their own milieu, and getting those persons to do for themselves what no one else can do for them. When he returned to the United States, Tom enrolled in the Cardozo Project at Howard University, teaching in high schools in poor Negro sections of Washington, D. C. He was using some of the skills that he had already developed so well abroad to bridge the cultural and social gaps with urban Negroes with backgrounds as different from his own in many ways as were Tanzanians'.

Perhaps it is because we spent two years away from the United States during one of the most militant periods of the Negro revolution in America that we are not sensitized to the years of latent hostility which has recently been called forth out of both whites and Negroes. But after eight months in the Cardozo Project, it would seem that no one would understand the Negro revolution better than Tom Steppe. Nevertheless, he lived in a Negro section of Washington where few whites do. Virtually no other white if approached by two Negroes with guns in a Negro section of a large city in 1967 would counsel the assailant about *his* safety and walk toward the gun. To do so in that context where the battles of the revolution are now the most heated could only have been misinterpreted as it was.

For two years we lived in a place with racial relations that are far better than they are in this country. Rarely if ever do whites and Africans kill each other in Tanzania. Only someone coming directly out of that environment would ever do what Tom Steppe did.

It is ironic that it is easier in so many ways to go outside the United States and live among persons of vastly different backgrounds than it is to move about within the United States and work on our own problems. It is only now that we are back that we can see the freedom we had to cross the cultural and social barriers that divide the privileged from underprivileged. When Peace Corps Volunteers return home to work on domestic social projects, it may be that they can see more clearly than anyone else what *must* be done, and are among the few like Tom who can ignore what our society dictates may not be done.

Paul T. Kelly

Berkeley, Calif.

Editor's note: Thomas J. Steppe, 25, was shot to death June 3 as he tried to dissuade two gunmen from robbing him. The shooting took place in front of Cardozo High School where Steppe taught geometry and algebra.

A world study

To The Volunteer:

Through the Peace Corps and other such organizations this country is learning its lessons in world cultures. It is learning by experience what it has never really understood before, that isolation—both in terms of geography and material wealth—breeds the ignorant self-assurance that has helped it to become one of the great nations of our day, but one of the least aware, internationalized nations of our time.

The almost unimaginable power of the United States can only be responsibly managed and utilized if this nation understands the world not in its own ethnocentric way, but objectively, internationally. For this reason it must learn and it must recognize that it cannot and does not learn alone—the giant school boy may have small teachers, but if his brain is ever to match and manage his brawn he must learn well, listen intently and practice his lessons; and then say, "I owe it to my teachers."

Jana McFarland
Former Volunteer

Claremont, Calif.

High expectations

To The Volunteer:

I find both the articles and the letters in The Volunteer to be very interesting. It is evident that both the Volunteers and the staff are searching for solutions. This in itself is a healthy atmosphere for an organization which is trying to sponsor a sort of world revolution. It is also evident that there is an overabundance of theory and often little of recorded experience. This is, I suppose, normal in an organization so young and in one which is trying not to become a bureau in the traditional manner.

I note in the letters from the Volunteers a thread of frustration. This is an undertone in most of the letters which seems to indicate that these young people have been led to expect greater acceptance of their ideas than they are actually getting. Actually it seems to me that they are doing a very fine job in getting any acceptance at all. They have the traditional three strikes against them. First, they are

Memorandum

TO : The field DATE: September, 1967
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Print, and other media

The Philippines traditionally has had a monopoly on Volunteer newsletter output, but India apparently has now taken the lead among print-minded programs. At the latest count, India had 11 regional newsletters and a national Peace Corps digest; the Philippines has 10 regional letters and the venerable *Ang Boluntaryo*.

□ □ □

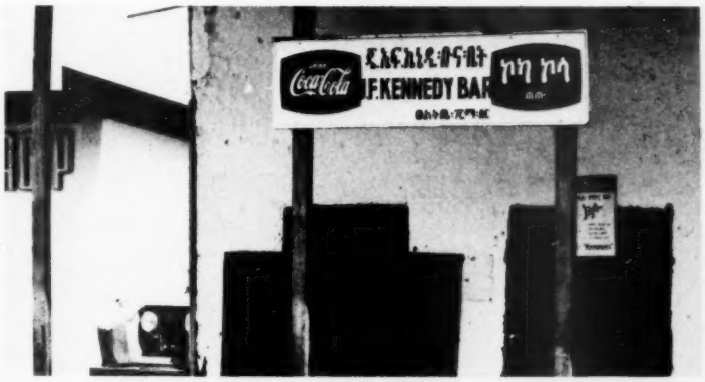
The Division of Bottomless Needs: Richard H. Stephens, president of the International Study Center in Washington, included the following in a statement made to a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee: "The Volunteer faces adverse living conditions. A third to half his time is spent simply staying alive—getting food and avoiding or recovering from illness. . . . After three to five months on the job, the typical Volunteer's reaction is to want to give up. Some pass through the crisis and go on to become highly effective Volunteers. A majority, it seems, 'wait out' the remaining two years. This is the Peace Corps' main problem."

□ □ □

The wedding of two former Volunteers inspired the bride's parents to begin the announcement: "Mr. and Mrs. (John Doe) at last have the pleasure of announcing the marriage of their daughter. . . ."

□ □ □

Ethiopia correspondent James McCaffery passed along this photograph with the following notation: "As an example of the very pervasive influence of Kennedy, this is a bar in a small village named Wolkite, about 150 kilometers from Addis Ababa. The people in the village might not know a thing about America (even where it is), but they will at least know about JFK." The picture was taken by Volunteer Gerry Sack.



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Changing places: National emergencies in Peace Corps countries often prompt anxious parents to call Peace Corps headquarters to inquire about the welfare of Volunteer sons and daughters. The recent crisis in the Middle East, for example, brought 152 inquiries from parents concerning Volunteers serving near the area. Last month, it was the other way around. A Volunteer in Uganda sent an emergency cable to Washington asking if her parents were alive and safe, in Detroit.

foreigners; second, they are young in a world that is run by the oldsters and third, they must recognize that the offer to help people improve is an implied criticism of the ways that people revere as an integral part of the culture.

The point of all of this is that these young people expect too much of themselves. If each Volunteer actually influences one potential leader in his tour of two years we may have more than we could get in many other and more expensive ways. If these young people just continue their making of friends and their teaching by example and by freely extended friendship the result will come in time. If they must see some immediate result they might try to relieve frustration by painting a fence.

OWEN W. CHARLES
Father of a Volunteer

Vallejo, Calif.

Another country

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

Who, in reality, is the returned Volunteer? He's just another Joe with a job in Peace Corps Washington; lucky enough, that is, to have been hired. He brings with him the relevant aspects of his field experience; usually little else in the way of background experience.

Unfortunately, organizational reality seldom nurtures individual expression and spirit especially at the "nitty-gritty" level of paper clips and telephone messages. In the face of an uncongenial environment it is the plight of each person to make his voice heard; to implement the transition from it "just being a job" to "satisfying work." Not everyone will be effective or happy working in the environment of Washington. A Volunteer in one country will succeed where in another country under different conditions he won't. Washington is simply "another country."

One suggestion for enhancing the role of the returned Volunteer, one which is going to annoy more than it will satisfy, is to hire returned Volunteers as assistants to the senior staff. If the person makes it, fine; his views will mingle with those of the policy makers. Events and demands will quickly determine if an assistant will make it or not, so such appointments should be made on a temporary basis. It's one way to solve the problem and may even put the other returned Volunteers a little more on their toes (somewhat hostile to their counterpart on the top) and, hopefully, more innovative in their thinking and interest.

JOEL FREISER

Bombay, India

First twins

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

In reference to your July Memorandum, I can vouch for the birth of the first Peace Corps twins, a boy and a girl, to Margaret and James O'Hara in Tanzania. I am the godfather of the boy, James III.

JOHN E. MCPHEE
Regional Director

Mwanza, Tanzania

Ads don't match jobs

TO THE VOLUNTEER:

The Peace Corps seems to have recently altered its educational requirements, making a college degree or a developed technical skill an absolute requirement. Two or more years of college no longer have any merit.

But the Peace Corps continues to aim many of its advertisements at those of us still in college. For example, your April issue included an ad appealing to us to ". . . get away from all the voices . . . before you make your biggest decision." This ad is clearly directed toward those of us in college and undecided as to just what to get that degree in. This ad is not even directed toward those with a technical skill, since most college students don't have a skill useful to the Peace Corps.

It sounds very appealing—until you try to join. After being delayed for a year by Peace Corps errors and red tape, I was finally told (after progressing to the point of passing a Peace Corps physical) that the Peace Corps would not even consider me until I receive my degree. I was told that the Peace Corps is now accepting few people without degrees or skills.

If a college *degree* or a technical skill is now a definite requirement, why doesn't the Peace Corps firmly take this stand and stop trying to appeal to those of us who are obviously without merit (i.e., college degrees).

MARALYN BANK

San Diego, Calif.

A plan for retirement

"We can't understand why healthy retired couples don't jump at the chance we did," said 65-year-old Bea Alford, returned Volunteer from British Honduras. Beginning this fall, Bea and her husband Dick, 67, are going to look for some answers to their questions about why more oldsters don't join the Peace Corps, and try to do some persuading on the side.

The Alfords plan to visit most of the "Leisure Worlds" and the homes and communities for retired persons in the Los Angeles area. They hope to discuss their Peace Corps experience with the oldsters, and show color slides of older Volunteers in the field. Those who have slides of oldsters in the Peace Corps and who would be willing to lend them to the Alfords should send them to Peace Corps, 630 Sansome St., Room 749, San Francisco, Calif. 94111.

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